

Testimony of Jeff Noel, Friends of Choice in Urban Schools
NCLB Report Card Contents
State Board of Education
Wednesday July 8, 2009

I appreciate the opportunity to address creating NCLB report cards. I am Jeff Noel a data analyst for Friends of Choice in Urban Schools. We are an organization that promotes high quality public charter schools in the nation's capital. I have previously performed data analysis for school districts and public charter schools in Ohio, Michigan, Hawaii, and California. I am a resident of ward 6. I have seen a preview of the proposed report card.

A substantial number of District of Columbia students choose to attend out of boundary or public charter schools. This makes school report cards very important; clear communication of how a school, LEA, or the state is doing academically is important to all parents, and directly affects where they send their child to school.

There are four points I wish to make:

1. All report cards (School and State) should have an informative one page summary
2. School report cards should indicate how well similar schools perform
3. School report cards should indicate if students are improving academically at a school, which would communicate how well the school helps low performing students
4. High school report cards should provide information on students' acceptance to college, graduation rates, participation in Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses, and school SAT and ACT scores.

I have attached an example of a report card that demonstrates these points.

Attachment Page 1 Letter A: A summary of information should be available that fits on one page and summarize major academic indicators. Parents do not have time to read anything longer.

Attachment Page 1 Letter B: Many other states compare schools to similar schools. While D.C. likely does not have enough schools to provide a similar school measure, it could provide a comparison of how well each school is doing compared to other schools serving the same student demographic population. This will help parents understand if a school's success is because of its programs or because it has few disadvantaged students.

Attachment Page 3 Letter C: As schools try to improve their test scores and make AYP, it is important that they do so by helping low performing students and not just by recruiting students of a higher academic caliber. Without a growth measure on the report card there is no way a parent can tell if a child who is struggling will be

able to get more successful support at another school, or just be surrounded by a different peer group. This is particularly important as District of Columbia Public Schools has six selective admissions high schools and 12 selective academies within schools. Expanding selective programs within schools could cause a school to look better academically even though they are not helping any of the current students.

Attachment Page 6 Letter D: More jobs require a college education than ever before. This is especially true of the D.C. metro area. It is important that high schools report on the college attendance of their students:

- a. Are their alumni attending college?
- b. Are they succeeding in college?
- c. Are they graduating college within five years?
- d. Are they preparing for college by taking AP and IB courses?
- e. How well are students performing on the SAT, ACT, and other college readiness exams?

I believe that the D.C. tuition assistance grant program has the data to enable these items to be included. Sharing it will help D.C.'s parents make better choices.

Thank you, I am happy to answer any questions.